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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2640

December 10, 1993

GATT -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy returned to meetings in Geneva, Switzerland on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to help negotiate final trade elements. The negotiators have agreed that a six-year, 21 percent reduction in farm export subsidies will be phased in slowly but will arrive at previously set levels at the end of the period. Espy says that if GATT is approved it will help to promote U.S. trade competitiveness in a more open international trading environment. The U.S. is the world's leading agricultural exporter, averaging 17 percent of the global market during the past three decades. The U.S. stands to benefit from increased demand for grains and oilseeds in the developing countries and for processed and convenience foods in developed countries. **Contact: Ali Webb (202) 720-4623.**

FARM COSTS & RETURNS SURVEY -- During February and March 1994 interviewers trained by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will contact 12,000 farmers and ranchers nationwide to ask them to take part in the annual farm costs and returns survey. The information produced by the survey helps policymakers to understand agriculture's strengths and weaknesses, and to formulate and adjust policies. The data is also used in setting target prices, loan rates, parity and support prices. Information on individual operations is not released. **Contact: Priscilla Glynn (202) 690-2164.**

WATER QUALITY PROJECTS -- USDA has approved 71 water quality incentive projects totalling \$15 million in 30 States. The program will provide financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers participating in the projects to enhance water quality through source reduction of agricultural pollutants. Incentive payments under the Agricultural Conservation Program will be made to improve pesticide and nutrient management, reduce excess animal waste application, and improve irrigation water management. USDA agencies will work closely with the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, and State water quality agencies to ensure that the projects are implemented effectively. **Contact: Robert Feist (202) 720-6789.**

OATH OF OFFICE -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has administered the oath of office to Grant Buntrock, administrator of the Agricultural Conservation and Stabilization Service. Buntrock headed the Washington office of the National Farmers Organization. Espy also swore in Anthony Williams as USDA's chief financial officer. Williams was the deputy comptroller for the State of Connecticut. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

CONVERTING CRP CONTRACTS -- Producers who enrolled land in the Conservation Reserve Program before November 1990 can obtain additional benefits by obtaining approval to revise their CRP contract. Converting grass and legume covers to hardwood trees, windbreaks, shelterbelts or wildlife corridors, can extend the contract 10 to 15 years and earn cost-share assistance for approved conversion. CRP contract holders are encouraged to inquire about the conversion options at their county ASCS office. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

MEAT PRODUCTION OUTLOOK -- Beef production next year is expected to be the largest since 1986. Efficiency gains in cattle feeding and increased placement weights have contributed to heavier slaughter weights without the problems of overfinished cattle as was the case in 1986. Turkey production in 1994 will increase 2 percent. Prices will be slightly lower. Broiler production will increase 5 percent as continued industry profitability encourages expansion. Record exports have helped support higher wholesale prices. Commercial pork production will increase one percent in 1994. Prices will be comparable to this year. **Contact: Leland Southard (202) 219-0767.**

DAIRY OUTLOOK -- Milk prices in 1994 are projected to be around \$12, but there is uncertainty about both supply and demand that could move the price a dollar higher or lower. Retail dairy prices are projected to be about steady in 1994. International markets are expected to stabilize but remain soft. While 1994 may be noted as the beginning of the BST (Bovine Somatotropin) era, the key factors in the dairy industry next year are likely to be more traditional: structural adjustment, shifts in commercial use, feed supplies and prices, and stocks. **Contact: James Miller (202) 219-0770.**

WHEAT -- Next year the U.S. wheat supply is expected to increase based on larger beginning stocks and little change in production or imports. Domestic use is expected to increase based on larger food, feed and residual use. U.S. exports should be only slightly larger than this year, wheat supplies of other exporters are expected to be ample. U.S. ending stocks should show little change from this year. **Contact: Sara Schwartz (202) 219-0824.**

VEGETABLES -- Lower prices in 1994 for tomatoes, lettuce, and other fresh salad vegetables will be partially offset by higher potato prices. Fresh vegetable acreage has expanded this fall likely resulting in larger supplies next year. The Consumer Price Index for fresh vegetables is expected to rise 2 to 4 percent in 1994, compared to a 6 percent increase this year. **Contact: Ralph Parlett (202) 219-0870.**

RECYCLING EXTENDS FORESTS -- By the year 2000, 37 percent of the paper and paperboard consumed in the U.S. will be recovered for recycling. In 1986 it was 28 percent. Prices for most recovered paper will increase substantially, eliminating the current market glut that dampens growth in recycling. Increased paper recycling will result in slower projected use of pulpwood and timber harvest, extending timber supplies. Both softwood and hardwood prices in the South are projected to remain stable. After two centuries of decline, the area of forestland has stabilized. Today the U.S. has about the same forest area as in 1920. **Contact: Fred Kaiser (202) 205-1747.**

EXERCISE -- You never outgrow your need to exercise. Regular physical activity can make the heart and lungs stronger, increase muscle strength and flexibility, and help you to feel good. Just a few changes in your daily routine can help. Short-term 10-minute exercise walks repeated throughout the day are beneficial, especially for older adults. Other suggestions to put more action in your daily activities include using the stairs rather than an elevator, walk rather than drive short distances, take several 1-minute stretch breaks during the day, and for urban dwellers establish a regular weekly schedule for an outdoor exercise activity. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-3329.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1905 -- Predictions by experts is provided by Gary Crawford on what the new year could hold for producers and consumers of food. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1387 -- Poinsettias, poinsettias; in search of the Christmas tree; buying breadmakers; a merry "moo" year; gifts for those who "bug" you. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1897 -- Wheat storage payments; 1994 - a better year for farmers?; broiler industry continues to expand; a pessimistic outlook for U.S. tobacco; the midwest dairy industry's future. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1650 -- In vitro Catsup?; mystery compound; grain crop alternative; high-nutrient flour; marginal vitamin A deficiency. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, December 20, catfish processing; Tuesday, December 21, trade update, crop & weather update; Wednesday, December 22, livestock update, world coffee situation; Thursday, December 23, Santa Claus weather. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on mail order food safety; DeBoria Janifer looks at holiday weight control; Dave Luciani reports on choosing the right Christmas tree.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and assistant secretary Ellen Haas at the USDA hearing in Washington, D.C. on improving nutrition in school meals; USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on the weather and crop situation; USDA economist Ron Gustafson on livestock and poultry.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on Charleston hot peppers; Lynn Wyvill reports on timber bridge research.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

FARM INCOME...is the number one concern of producers in the area served by **Jim Thoreson** (KWAT, Watertown, SD). Farmers finished a year with reduced yields and lowered quality, and talk at the meeting circuit this year reflects the income concern. Jim says lakes in the region are full and water covers low areas. The outlook calls for above normal precipitation. Too much snow this winter will result in problems with water next spring.

A WET PATTERN...still exists, says **Gene Millard** (KFEQ, St. Joseph, MO). The soil is saturated and producers are concerned that levees won't be repaired in time for a wet spring. Gene is covering the Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture. A hot topic is what can be done to sustain and encourage individual pork producers in the state. Northern Missouri is targeted for bigtime pork operations. One 20,000 unit is in production, and two more are planned.

MOVED...**Patty Babler** from WFRL, Freeport, IL to WFTS, Freeport. **Boyce Deifenger** is producing farm programming at WRFL.

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A GERMAN BREWERY...plans to locate in the state, says **Bob Flint** (WCFR, Springfield, VT). It has taken options on farm land to grow its own barley and hops, saying the water and climate are perfect for their product. The brewery could create 400 jobs. The state is supportive.

FARM EQUIPMENT SALES...are up, says **Rod Thorson** (WCMY, Ottawa, IL), and farm advertising is up substantially over last year. Rod says it reflects the great year that producers had in his area. Corn growers tell Rod that they are making plans to set aside 5 percent of their acreage next year.

PECAN AND PEANUT CROPS...were smaller than expected, says **Deborah Kostroun** (Oklahoma Agrinet, Oklahoma City), preventing producers from filling the demand resulting from smaller crops in other areas. Deborah says pastures are dry for winter wheat grazing in northwest Oklahoma.

VIC POWELL
Office of Communications